

HOW TO ORGANIZE A BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

So you want to know more about organizing a Boys & Girls Club. Where do you start? It all begins with wanting to make life better for young people in your community. Once the idea of a Club catches on, you'll find that momentum will build, and you'll be on your way to making a real difference in young lives.

1. Get started.

Establishing a Boys & Girls Club usually starts with one or two individuals who initiate the idea and then get others interested. So, the first step can be taken by YOU. Discuss the idea with representatives of service clubs, local government, civic, social, fraternal and labor organizations. Then they can reach out and involve other community leaders in business, industry and the professions.

Spread the word and stimulate interest in starting a Club!

2. Contact the nearest BGCA Service Center.

BGCA maintains three Service Centers to provide support to Boys & Girls Clubs across all 50 states. After you gather community support, have your group's representative contact the nearest BGCA Service Centers to discuss setting up a working partnership with a Boys & Girls Club in your area. The BGCA Director of Organizational Development (DOD) for your state and local Club leaders will help your group take the next steps.

3. Organize a steering committee.

Hold a meeting -- invite people who are interested in starting a Boys & Girls Club and invite the DOD and the Chief Professional Officer (CPO) of the Club nearest you. Keep your group small to start. Explain the purpose of the meeting to the group and have the DOD and CPO talk about Boys & Girls Clubs. If the group is committed and interested in pursuing the idea further, form a steering committee to begin preliminary organization work.

4. Conduct a Community Readiness Assessment.

The need for a Club in your community may be quite obvious, but you still need to put it in writing. To document the need, your DOD will provide you with a Community Readiness Assessment to get the details. Have your group complete the assessment and return to your DOD, who'll help your committee with the results. This survey will determine how effectively the needs of young people are

being met in the community. It may also help to identify community resources available that could help support a Club.

5. Develop a Management Operating Agreement.

Once the Readiness Assessment is complete, it's time to put together official policies for establishment of your community's Boys & Girls Club. Your next step, assisted by your DOD, is to work out a Management Operating Agreement with an existing local Boys & Girls Club.

6. Organize a Unit Advisory Council.

Once policies are in place, you can organize a Unit Advisory Council, elect officers and establish committees that will help operate a Club. Consult with the DOD and CPO for guidance in selecting a Unit Advisory Council.

7. Secure a location.

Now is the time to scout a location for your Club and/or find a suitable building. Work with your CPO on a location and the kind of building that would be satisfactory for a Boys & Girls Club.

8. Determine costs.

Create a budget for the cost of building renovations, equipment and an operating budget for one year. The CPO will be invaluable to your committee in this kind of practical planning.

9. Raise the funds.

You are now ready to raise funds together with the CPO and existing Club organization. The most common method of raising funds is through a community-wide founder's campaign using face-to-face solicitations – get out there and ask! Consult with the CPO to develop a resource development plan that will get your Club off to a great start.

10. Recruit a Club director.

The wheels are in motion: now you're ready to employ a qualified Boys & Girls Club professional to lead your Club. The assisting CPO will provide guidance in this all-important process of identifying good candidates.

BGCA SERVICE CENTERS

Chicago Service Center: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, California, Hawaii.

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<http://www.bgca.org/whoweare/Pages/StartaClub.aspx>